12-15-10

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

When Americans point the finger at Obama, four fingers are pointing back at them.

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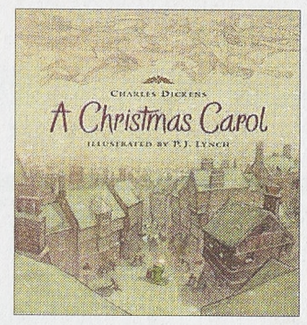
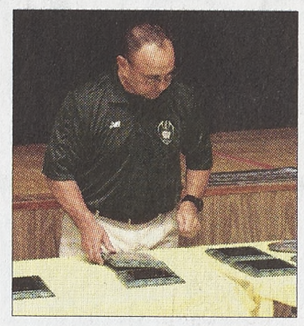


The Valley College Theatre Arts Department presented an adaptation of "A Christmas Carol."

SEE VALLEY LIFE PAGE 4



The Valley College football team held a banquet Monday to honor players and staff.

SEE SPORTS PAGE 6

lavalleystar.com | December 15, 2010 | Volume 73 Issue 10

VARUGHAN CHAPANIAN, PHOTO EDITOR| VALLEY STAR

THAT'S THE ONE - George Tarakchyan (center) and his family selected a Christmas tree Tuesday to take home for the holiday season at Santa & Sons tree lot located at the corner of Burbank Boulevard and Oxnard Street. Initially established by Martin Luther, the Christmas tree originally served as a tree of hope in the Garden of Eden. Today it serves as a symbol of Christmas festivities.

RECOGNIZING WHAT REALLY MATTERS

Students attend recognition ceremony in Monarch Hall.

IVAN ZUNIGA
ONLINE EDITOR

It was truly a memorable moment for students who joined to commemorate their accomplishments this semester. The Continuing Education Recognition ceremony recognized students who are making an effort to further their education.

Monarch Hall was filled with students involved in a variety of Valley College programs that help students improve in English as a second language courses, vocational education, parenting, and foundational skills.

"It's so inspiring for students and the speakers that were there, these are students who really want to continue on with their education, take credit classes and earn their AA degree," said Director Lynne Brower of the Continuing Education program.

President Sue Carleo made a quick appearance along with other members of the administration; Sandy Mayo, Vice President of Academic Affairs; Deborah DiCesare, Dean of Academic Affairs & Workforce Development; and Don Gautier, Academic Senate President were all there to show their support and speak on behalf of the students who showed up and praised all of the students' efforts.

"This isn't something that anybody can do, it is the exceptional effort that makes me happy and so that's worth recognition. We love to do these kind of things," said Carleo. "We do that with commencement every year and lots of other kinds of special programs that we have."

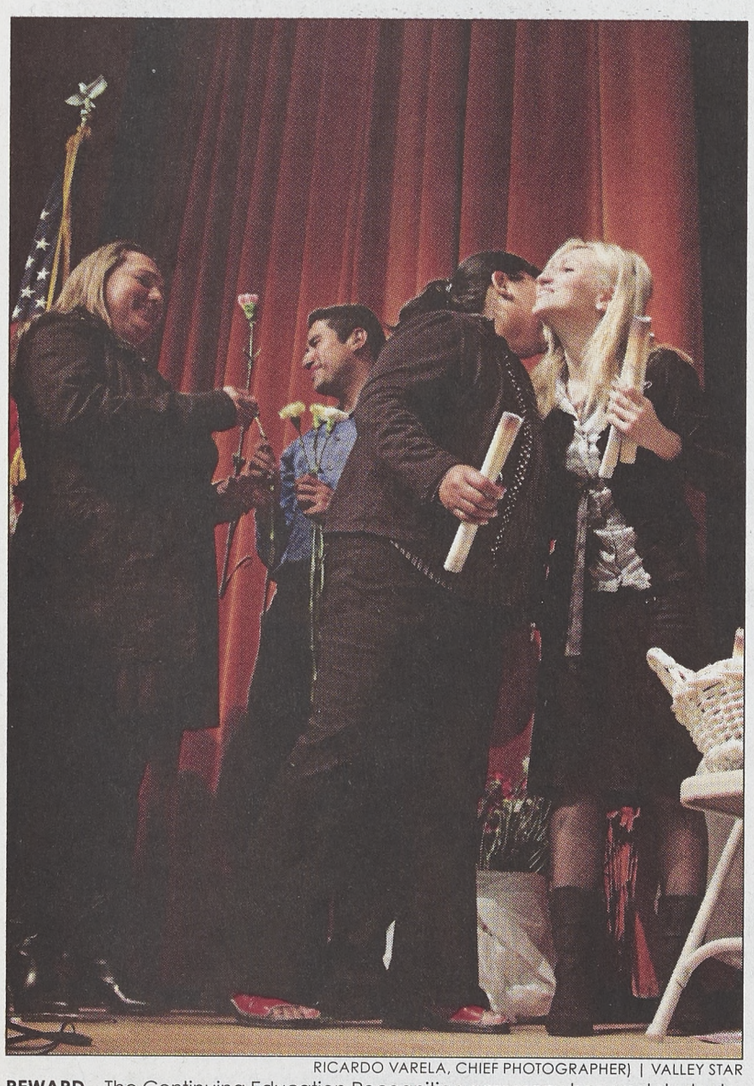
Certificates were awarded in a variety of programs, ranging from ESL and Civics, Computers in the Workplace, Certified Nurse Assistant/Home Health Aide, and Careers in Child Development.

"I was a member in this program, when I started at Valley, which was over two years ago, and I think it's very encouraging for these students," said former Valley student Lorena Gutierrez. "We just started to learn English, because it's very hard when we you come from another country and also the self-esteem goes up and students put more effort into their classes."

Gutierrez was able to transfer to Cal State Northridge, earn three scholarships and three AA degrees in child development, liberal studies and behavioral studies within a three-year span.

Since 1995 the Continuing Education Recognition program has been able to help students like Gutierrez and many other students to further their education.

"Sometimes some of these students may have not graduated from high school, this is their first time their name is being called and being recognized and I think that's pretty important to give them self-confidence to know we as a campus care about them," said Brower.



RICARDO VARELA, CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER) | VALLEY STAR

REWARD - The Continuing Education Recognition ceremony honored students.

STEPHANIE COLMAN| VALLEY STAR

HELPING - The L.A. Fellows place out of work professionals into volunteer jobs.

JOB TRAINING PROGRAM IS A WIN-WIN

Program pairs personal development with volunteerism to help out-of-work job seekers.

STEPHANIE COLMAN
STAFF WRITER

As area unemployment holds steady at more than 10 percent, LA Fellows, part of Valley College's Job Training department, connects out-of-work professionals and area non-profits to create a win-win situation..

"LA Fellows is a unique training program that provides job seekers with a combination of professional development and volunteerism to serve as a meaningful pathway to employment," said Valley President Sue Carleo.

The program began in September and is funded by the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department through the City of Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board. Funding will support four sessions of thirty fellows each. More than 100 professionals applied for the first 30 openings.

Those accepted to the program receive 140 hours of training throughout seven weeks. Training is provided by Valley Job Training staff members and area executive career coaches, and includes critical thinking, resume writing, advanced computer skills, professional grant writing and generating business leads. The training is free, however participants must commit to volunteering a minimum of 100 hours with a partnering non-profit organization of their choice.

Project Coordinator Allison Deutch says placing fellows with area non-profits gives them the opportunity to participate in a real, hands-on activity where they can demonstrate initiative and leadership, and leave with a marketable experience on their resume.

"We want them to take on a project. It's not just stuffing envelopes for eight hours," Deutch said. "We work with non-profits that want (fellows) to come in and work

|See **JOB TRAINING**, Page 2|

THE LOW DOWN

WHO TOOK THE CHRIST OUT OF CHRISTMAS?

Christmas has become a holiday with little cause and lots of cash.

CRISTINA SERRATO

Christmas was once a Christian holiday that emphasized religious reverence, "Peace on Earth and good will toward men," but for some, Christmas has become a perverted shadow of good intentions.

Now the Gift of the Magi just means more debt for many Americans who have forgotten the true meaning of Christmas and filled in the blanks with material possessions. "I hate putting stuff on my card," said Valley business major Jesenia Valdez. "I resent people after I get the bill."

Each holiday season manufacturers market a plethora of products aimed to help consumers lose weight, find love, smell pretty, or make others jealous, because purchasing the most expensive, popular and extravagant items is a reflection of your social status (and bank account). Sellers spend countless amounts on ad space designed for the "ideal' buyer, or their parents, who are sucked into making unnecessary purchases to display their "love." Since more conventional ways of displaying affection have been lost to text, e-mail, IM and the occasional phone call, parents are left with few ways of saying, "I love you" and gifts are becoming a not-so-good substitution for many people.

"Brands are the new religion," declared the global advertising firm Young & Republican in a 2001 Financial Times article. "People turn to them for meaning."

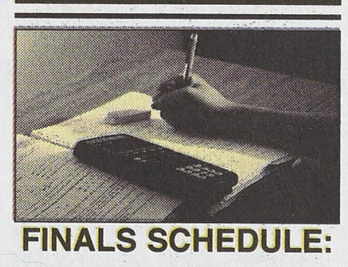
|See **COLUMN**, Page 2|

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

Christmas

Santa & Sons Christmas tree lot has been selling trees on campus since 2001. The company grows their own trees and sells them to the public.

ONLINE



FINALS SCHEDULE:

The finals schedule can be found online.

This and more can be found in full @ www.lavalleystar.com

THE VALLEY STAR INFO & STAFF

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JOB TRAINING

Continued from page 1

on event planning, or work in the accounting department and doing an audit, or work on a Web site for a marketing project."

Paul Van Ast, deputy executive director for Community Career Development, Inc., a non-profit organization specializing in workforce development, has nothing but praise for the three LA Fellows originally assigned to his office.

"They were great. They jumped right in and helped with paperwork, interviewing and counseling," he said. "It was a huge help. It really was a great bunch of people. I've already asked when can I get some more."

Van Ast was so impressed with one of the fellows, he offered her full-time employment at the close of her volunteer service. So far, six fellows have successfully found work since completing the program and graduating in November.

Those still looking for work now do so with a renewed sense of purpose.

"The best thing about the program is that I now have more confidence in my job search. I know I'm not alone," said first-session fellow Kimberly James. "When you're out of work, it's easy to lose motivation. I really regained my motivation with this program. It's a confidence builder."

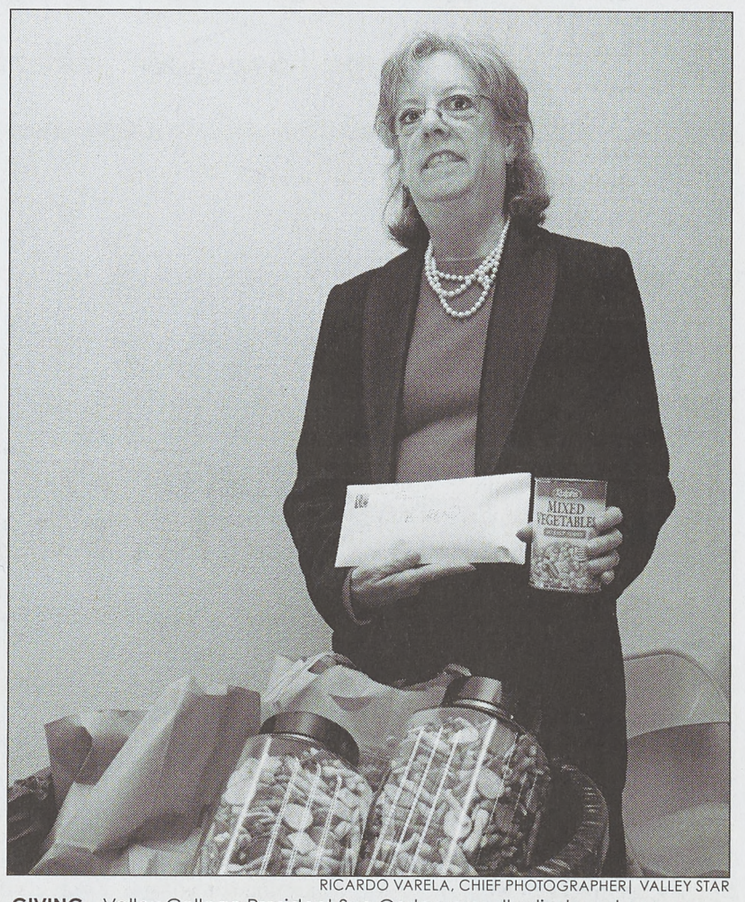
The next session of LA Fellows begins on Jan. 24, 2011. Interested applicants must attend an orientation session in the Valley cafeteria conference room on Dec. 21 or Jan. 6 at 10 a.m. and submit an application no later than Jan. 7 at 2 p.m.

For more information, visit www.lafellows.org or call (818) 947-2941.

ADMINISTRATORS HELP MEND POVERTY

Valley administrators and campus groups donate food and money to a poverty agency.

JON SEELEY
NEWS EDITOR



RICARDO VARELA, CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER| VALLEY STAR

GIVING - Valley College President Sue Carleo proudly displayed non-perishable food items and money donated by faculty members at a Tuesday afternoon event for non-profit MEND's cause of helping the needy.

Around 250 Valley College faculty, staff, and administrators donated a 50-gallon barrel full of canned goods and other nonperishable food and $350 to non-profit organization Meet Every Need with Dignity (MEND) in Monarch Hall Tuesday.

MEND is the largest poverty agency in the San Fernando Valley, and provided services to 31,000 needy individuals per month in 2009 according to mendpoverty.org. The organization helps with job placement, job skills training, medical, dental, and vision care. They also give emergency food and clothing to poor children and their families.

"We got contributions from the different organizations on campus," said Valley President Sue Carleo. "… it's really a nice way to start the holiday season."

The event was organized six weeks ago by administrators to help the poorest members of the Valley community during the holidays. Donations came from unions, clubs, and foundations on campus.

A small contribution of money or nonperishable food items bought admittance into the event which featured children from the child development center performing holiday songs and a trivia game featuring questions about Christmas, Chanukah, and Kwanza.

"We didn't spend any college money, we did it all from within ourselves," said Carleo. "Plus, we're giving a huge contribution to MEND; so, yeah, we feel pretty good about it."

For more information go to MendPoverty.org

COLUMN

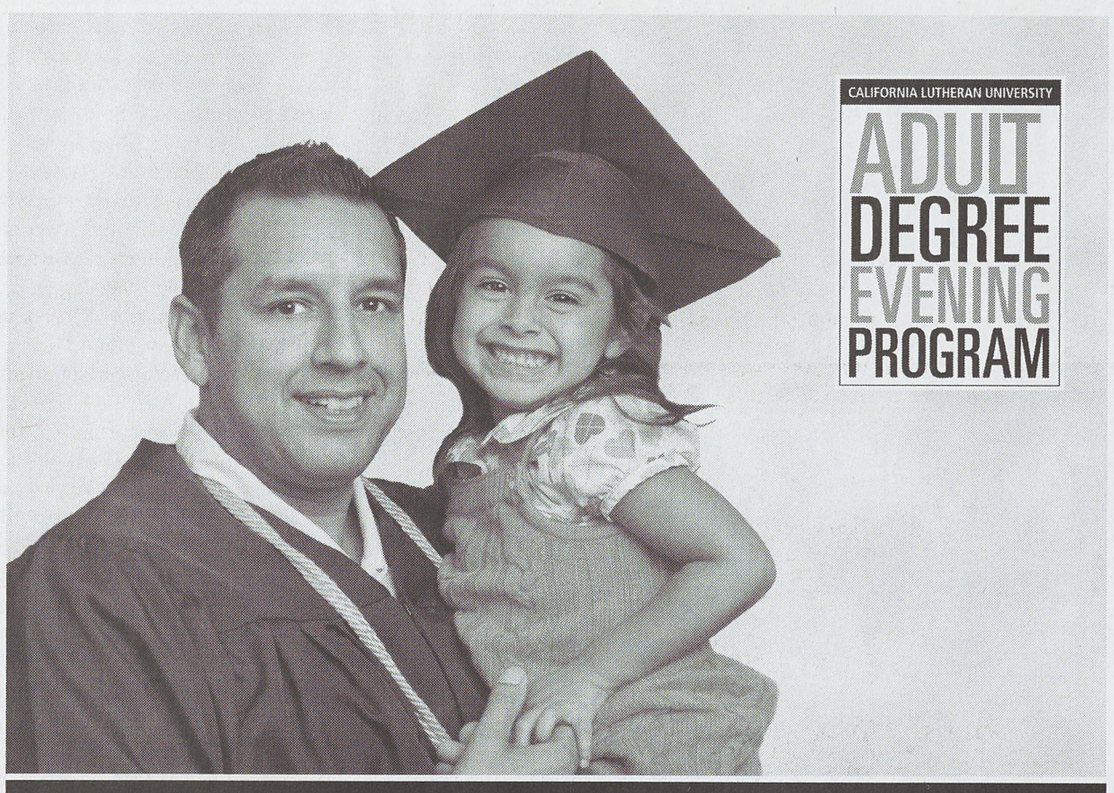
Continued from page 1

A recent Gallup poll discovered that Americans intend to spend an average of $616 for Christmas this year, which is a 10-year low. Department stores are expected to take a 40 percent sales hit during the 2010 holiday season and discount stores, like Wal-Mart and Target, are projected to have little sales changes despite the reduction of "play money" that many Americans have.

In the religion of the American consumer the ad man has become a missionary and brand names are the gods which deserves homage. MAC, Nike, WII and Versace will receive more than their fair share of tithes, offerings and a possible mauled shopper as sacrifice, while Jesus is left increasingly in the cold.

"The church is pretty rich," said Valley finance major Joseph Avetisyan. "I don't think the church has a problem...buying gifts is still giving so it's not bad. The stores are doing good and the persons giving and getting the gift are happy."

In the last 100 years Americans have turned the season of giving into the season of getting. The pews have become sparse because most of our consumerism society is out on Christmas day still looking for the perfect gift. Retailers happily accommodate last-minute shoppers by offering longer hours, more employees and holiday deals on Christmas day in a final attempt to suck every last penny out of the Christmas customer. Sadly, Jolly Old Saint Nick has lost his job to the NASDAQ.



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EDITOR'S NOTE:
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ASU FALLS SHORT IN RESPONSE TO RECENT CLASS CANCELLATIONS

Students shouldn't have to wonder if and how their elected student officials are reacting to the loss of classes.

STEPHANIE COLMAN
STAFF WRITER

The recent class cuts have left more than 6,500 Valley College students without necessary courses. As they struggle to salvage what's left of their winter and spring schedules, many are wondering if and how their elected ASU representatives are addressing the educational crisis.

"I have not heard anything regarding how ASU is responding to the cuts," said Valley student Johnny Wampler.

When questioned, ASU Vice President Ronnie Kazooba was quick to defend the student government by citing semester-long efforts to meet with state assembly members. He also spoke of a 500-signature petition against cuts to education.

With nearly 7,000 students losing classes in the past 30 days, 500 signatures seem insignificant. The bigger problem is that most students had no idea a petition was available. Not surprising when even Kazooba himself admits he was "…not aware of any publicity done for this effort."

It's sad when the campus honor society does a better job promoting its sale of Halloween costumes than the student government can manage to help the Valley community take a stand against cancelling classes.

When the Educational and Planning Committee first met to discuss necessary cuts to Winter 2011, Academic Senate President Don Gauthier urged the ASU representatives in attendance to, as students, communicate to the district chancellor and local and state representatives about the growing difficulties associated with getting an education. "Unless you communicate in real personal ways – a letter that says, 'Here's how this has affected me,' it doesn't mean anything," he said. "You have a story, and you need to tell it so they understand the true nature of the situation."

That should have been a campus-wide rallying cry with ASU leading the charge toward an organized letter-writing campaign or call-a-thon to representatives -- acts that would personalize the challenges created by cut classes. Or at least an opportunity to utilize the Valley Star, KVCM and the campus Web site to let students know of an available petition.

In a recent post to the Valley Facebook page, student Nicole Plank wrote, "Does anybody know if there is anything students can do to help correct the budget crisis? We just keep getting shafted with classes and nobody offers ways we can help get things back on track. There has to be something we can do."

Anger can be a powerful motivator, and students personally affected by class cancellations would welcome the opportunity to make their voices heard if given a little direction by those responsible for helping to protect their educational interests.

In failing to do so, students are left to assume the worst.

"In my personal opinion the lack of reaction from the ASU and student body is a sign of defeat," said Valley student Chanel Godinez. "It's like we as a whole have just come to accept that we can't do anything about the future of our educational establishment so why even try?"

Public Relations 101: Perception is the reality.

GOT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Letters to the editor can be sent to: **editor@lavalleystar.com** or submitted online at **www.lavalleystar.com.** Letters must be limited to 300 words and may be edited for content. Full name and contact information must be supplied in order for letters to be printed. Send by Thursday for the following week's issue.

SAMSON UBA | VALLEY STAR

HERE WE ALL ARE, ENTERTAIN US

Everyone is so quick to point the blame as long as it's not at themselves.

J.P. SPENCE
MANAGING EDITOR

In politics it's generally accepted that it's easier to vote against bad policy than it is to vote for good policy. While this tacit and unfortunate circumstance may have swept President Obama into office, the general public has to remember that for every cause there is an effect and while "Yes We Can" in 2008 was great, we cannot blame the president if we change our slogan to "We Don't Care" in 2010.

It's funny that two years into a four-year term, the media wants to start labeling Obama as a "good" or "bad" president. Labeling is fine. It helps compartmentalize subjects and people into nice little files for people to keep in the back of their mind. It's another thing to it do so prematurely.

The main problem isn't that Obama is weak or that he hasn't completed anything (yet), it's about deciphering the truth from what is just white noise.

Let's take the upcoming tax cuts bill. The truth is this: these tax cuts are essentially an extension of the tax cuts under George W. Bush that Republicans voted on almost unanimously. You wouldn't know that with the Republican leadership saying, "I'm not going to be bullied into voting for things that will hurt our country because politicians ignored the problem until it was crisis."

No offense, but that's how our crappy economy got here in the first place, thanks to our last administration.

Government itself isn't the sole problem either. Midterm elections are traditionally lower than general elections but this year's was a record-setting low, especially among the youth vote, which was down 20 percent.

"It wasn't that we didn't care," said Brendan Campbell, Chairman of the U-M College Democrats. "We were disgusted with rhetoric from the right. To see such undertones dominating political discourse turned off young voters this cycle."

That's great that Mr. Campbell was disgusted, but disgust is usually a good reason to vote.

So let's get this straight. It's only been two years since Obama won the presidential election while altering the American zeitgeist in the final haze of George W. Bush… and we want the president's head on a proverbial stick.

Obama said that this process of cleaning up Bush's mess would take years. He never said it would be easy, would be quick, or that we would like him at the end of all this. The general public needs to understand that at some point the mob-rule mentality doesn't work. Obama needs to shoulder some of the blame, but ultimately the blame is on us.

WORTHLESS WORDS

A look at "Can't-keep-a-promise Obama."

CRISTINA SERRATO
STAFF WRITER

Though a man's word should be as good as gold, President Obama's word may not be worth its weight in salt, even if it was a pillar of salt that weighed as much as Louie Anderson.

"It's not fair that everyone blames Obama for things not getting fixed," said unemployed Tarzana resident Sami Mathi. "He doesn't have the power to make changes alone, it's a process and if nobody votes, how are the changes going to be made? They aren't."

Obama cannot make or change laws by himself, but he is sleeping on many of the promises he made during his 2008 electoral campaign. Understandably there is a level of checks and balances and oppositional hurdles the president has to clear in order to keep any of the promises he made. Obama is more than midway through his presidency and has accomplished little, outside of passing the health care reform bill. Despite the fact that many of the bill's proponents would like to pat themselves on the back, a Virginia judge ruled Monday that portions of the new health care reform law may be unconstitutional. Now Obama has one more hurdle.

"I will stop giving tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, and I will start giving them to companies that create good jobs right here in America," said Obama in the Aug. 28, 2008 Democratic Convention ironically called 'The American Promise.' "I will eliminate capital gains taxes for the small businesses ... I will cut taxes…for 95 percent of all working families."

Obama made promises to end income taxes for seniors who make under $50,000 annually, to allow imported prescription drugs and to publicly recognize the Armenian Genocide, as well a promise that no family making less than $250,000 would see "any form of tax increase" under his presidency. He failed to keep those promises and 20 more.

According to Poltifact.com the president has "stalled" on 85 of the 506 initial promises he made, he has 232 promises that are "in the works." Starting promises does not equal promises kept and though Obama has kept 123 of the promises he made he still has a long road ahead of him as his "promises" tally has reached nearly 600.

"I would like to see Obama take care of unemployment," said Valley College political science major Victor Adame. "He should create more jobs by having the federal government invest in infrastructure."

While many hold the president responsible for all the woes of the US, it can be fair to say the president made more promises than he had in his bag of tricks, like every other politician. It is also fair to say that the uninformed may hold Obama to higher accountability because his election changed America, despite the fact he might have been faking us out on a few things. Somebody should have stood up before Obama reached promise number 500 and said, "C'mon Obama, quit joshing us."

THE ABSENT PROFESSOR

Constant teacher cancellations are becoming a nuisance to students.

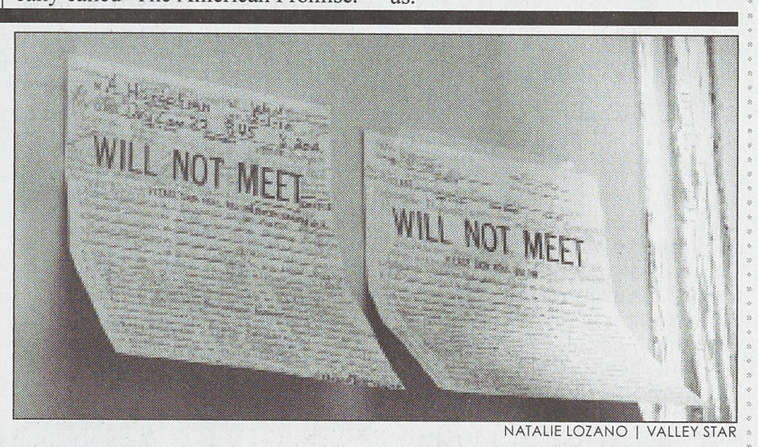
JOSHUA LAWRENCE
STAFF LAWRENCE

The happiness on students' faces is uncontrollable when they see that pink slip on the door. It can only mean one thing, "Class Will Not Meet." The students scramble rapidly into their backpacks and notebooks to get the first working pen they can find and sign their names in the numbered slots. Although having a random day off from class can be considered a godsend, constant teacher cancellation is quite annoying.

"My first problem is that there is no way to find out if class was cancelled ahead of time. Secondly, I paid for this class and when class doesn't meet, I feel that some of my money goes down the drain," said Valley College night student Alex Van Debunt.

Paul, who wishes to keep his last name anonymous, has had class cancelled five times this semester, three of them in a row. "It's just getting annoying," he said. "The fact that I am losing money every time class is cancelled bothers me." He also explained that the professor's excuse was that she was sick, but if that was the case, the administration should have a way to let him know through e-mail.

When asked about teacher absence problems, Sandy Mayo, Vice President of Academic Affairs said, "When we see a pattern of absences we follow up with the instructor to see if there is a problem that requires assistance."



NATALIE LOZANO | VALLEY STAR

Professors that constantly miss class should not only be investigated, but also put on probation. There are too many students who can't get the classes they need at this school. The last thing these students need is an instructor that does not show up.

"I do not recall using discipline for absences," said Mayo. "But we have had extensive conversations when we have become aware of problematic patterns."

According to many professors, if absences become a problem the school simply never hires that instructor again. Nevertheless, it seems that many teachers are re-hired due to the massive amount of cancellations experienced this semester. Hopefully, this problem is addressed and professors stop wasting the students' time and money.

VALLEY VIEW | WHERE DO YOU THINK PRESIDENT OBAMA HAS FALLEN SHORT, IF AT ALL?

"I think he needs to be a little tougher. I think he needs to stop trying to make friends and he needs to just toughen up."

-TAMARA HABER, NURSING

"He's doing the best job that he can and that's all we can hope for. He has a big mess to clean up."

-HENRY MARTINEZ, UNDECIDED

"I don't really follow politics that much ... I would say pay a little more attention to the drug cartels and immigration"

-CHADWICK POWEL, RESPIRATORY THERAPY

"He just needs to put the pedal to the metal on that economy situation because right now we are creating more debt."

-CARLO MAGHIRANG, THEATER ARTS

PHOTOS BY VARUGHAN CHAPANIAN | VALLEY STAR

THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID …

MORE BANG FOR THE BUCK

With new security regulations in place this holiday season, TSA is offering travelers the gift that keeps on giving.

KELLY DAVIS

As holiday travel picks up, those of us jetting off to celebrate with family and friends can look forward to an extra special gift, courtesy of the Transportation Security Administration. A degrading physical search of private parts awaits the lucky passengers who are singled out in airport security lines across the country; that is, if they decline to have invasive body scanners catch a glimpse of every nook and cranny of their body.

Travelers everywhere are outraged at the new screening procedures put into place by the TSA, myself included. As I prepared to board my flight this previous Thanksgiving, I weighed my options as far as submitting to the new security procedures. I could risk what TSA administrator, John Pistole, claims is a safe and effective exposure to radiation or I could opt to have a stranger run their hands over every crevice of my body. My only other option would be to react indignantly and refuse to subject myself to either, thus putting my holiday vacation in jeopardy. While I didn't welcome the idea of whoring myself out to the TSA, I wasn't willing to gamble with missing my flight. I decided to try my luck and keep my mouth shut. Fortunately, I wasn't one of the lucky ones and passed through security uneventfully.

Nearly 40,000 Americans have signed a petition demanding that Congress and President Obama immediately suspend the new security procedures. Rep. Ron Paul refers to the body scanner/pat-down security measures as "soviet-style nonsense." Talk show host Rush Limbaugh said on his program, "They're [the Administration] not happy with what you did on Election Day, and this is how you're gonna [sic] pay for it." And Saturday Night Live spoofed the situation with a phony TSA advertisement featuring scantily clad women seductively asking, "Feeling a little lonely this holiday season? Looking for a little human interaction? Do you want to feel contact in certain, special places?"

But most importantly, four University of California San Francisco doctors specializing in imaging and cancer sent a letter to the White House detailing their concerns that passengers more than 65 years of age are at risk of the mutagenic effects of the X-rays -- known as melanocyte aging -- that the dose of X-rays to breast tissue puts women at a higher risk of cancer, that HIV and cancer patients are at risk for the induction of cancer due to the damage it can do to white blood cells, and that the proximity of the testicles to skin puts men at risk for sperm mutagenesis.

Since the 9/11 attacks, the issue of airport security has not been easy to deal with. According to Limbaugh, racial profiling is the answer; but according to our Constitution, that's illegal. Also unconstitutional, the new TSA policies, but thanks to a loophole, we are being subjected to what, in California, could be considered sexual assault.

With a history of cancer in my family, the next time I fly I'll be opting out of the body scanners and reluctantly allowing a stranger to fondle me in areas it took me years to even let my lady doctor examine. Rest assured, my tampon string is not a fuse, although ironically, I do refer to them as spark plugs. My concern is this, can I pick the agent that molests me before my flight and if so, can we develop a rating system for their groping skills? Frankly, with the ever-rising cost of air travel, I think I deserve a little more bang for my buck.

E-mail Kelly Davis at
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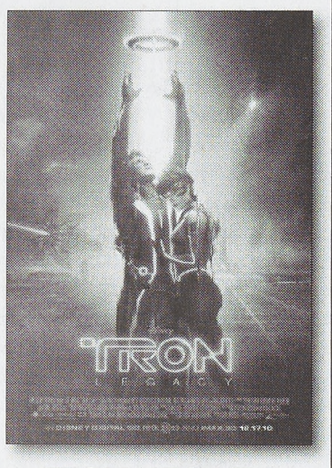
THE MOVIES

OPENING THIS WEEKEND



TRON : LEGACY

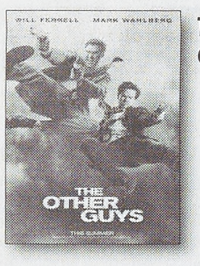
JEFF BRIDGES
GARRETT HEDLUND
OLIVIA WILDE

TOP 5 BOX OFFICE:

- *The Chronicles of Narnia: $24.5M+*
- *The Tourist: $17M+*
- *Tangled: $14.6M+*
- *Harry Potter and The Deathly Hollows: Part 1: $8.5M+*
- *Unstoppable: $3.75M+*

MEDIA RELEASES

DVD

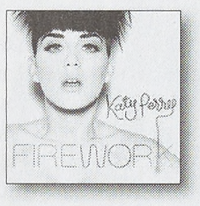


THE OTHER GUYS

ALSO AVAILABLE:

- *Despicable ME*
- *"24": Season 8*
- *THe A-Team*
- *The Town*

SONGS TOP DOWNLOADS



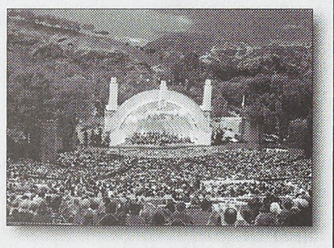
KATY PERRY

Firework

ALSO:

- Bruno Mars - Grenade
- Black Eyed Peas - The Time (Dirty Bits)
- Pink - Raise Your Glass

CONCERTS & THEATRE



- *Adam Lambert: Dec. 16 Club Nokia*
- *Kottonmouth Kings: Dec. 17 Grove of Anaheim*
- *Rob Halford: Dec. 17 The Wiltern*
- *Ozomatli: Dec. 18 Club Nokia*
- *Billy Idol: Dec. 18 The Ventura Theatre*
- *The Vandals: Dec. 18 House of Blues Anaheim*
- *Los Lobos: Dec. 19 House of Blues Sunset Strip*

STUDENTS PERFORMING FOR STUDENTS

Valley College's Free Concert Series ends with a student performance workshop.

DAVID MOTTE
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

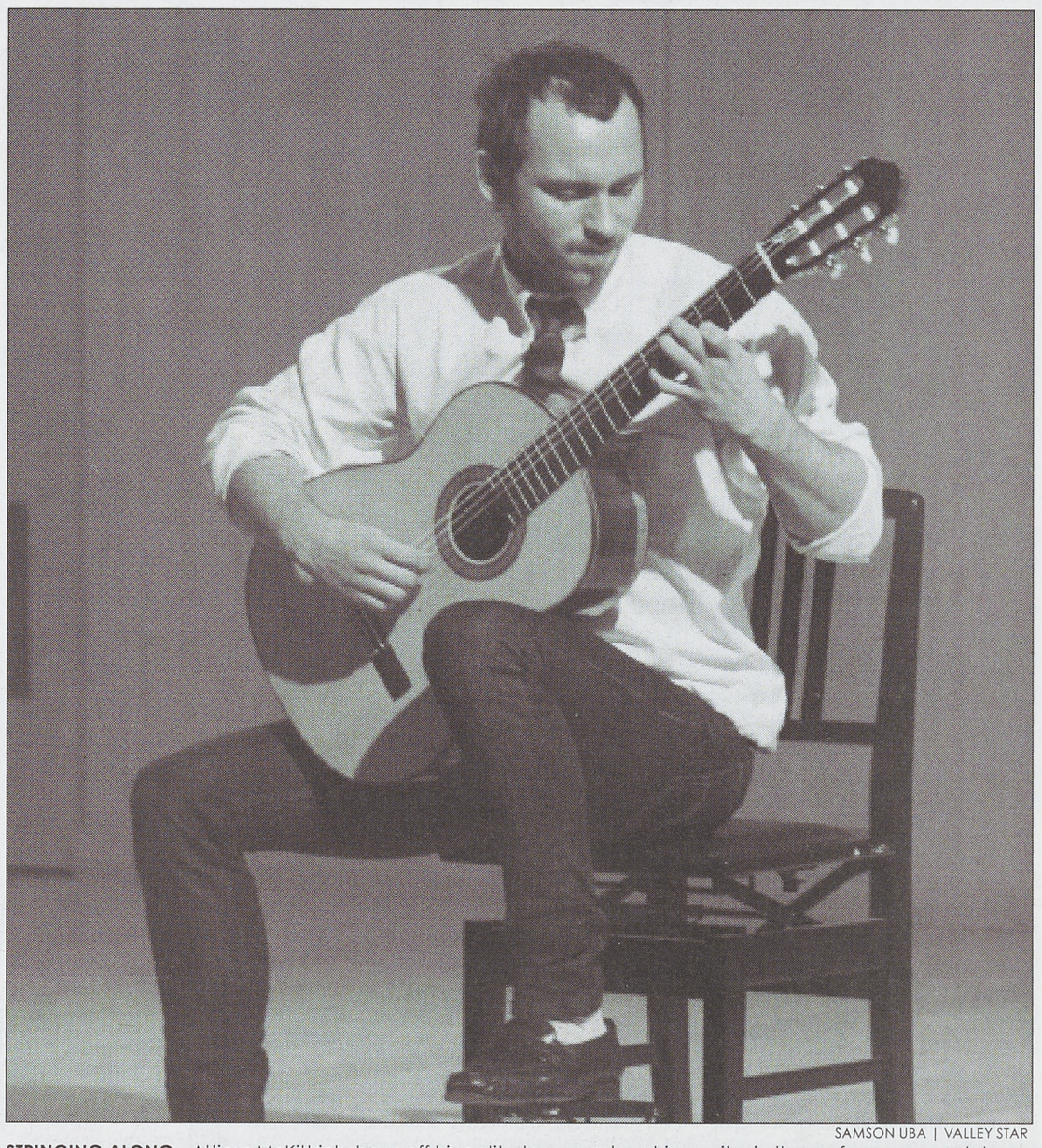
In a welcome change from the weekly woodwind ensemble, Valley College's Free Concert Series featured a student performance workshop Wednesday afternoon. The show consisted of four student guitarists and one student percussionist taking turns flaunting their talents before a student audience.

Guitarists Kelvin McKay, Chris Sabjan, Anthony Gloria, Jose Miranda, and Atticus McKittrick all performed various classical pieces by Beethoven, Bach and Heitor Villa-Lobos on their nylon-string guitars. Anthony Gloria rendered one of his own highly technical compositions called "Betwixt Midnight and Morrow" as one of his selections, as well as a note-worthy interpretation of Beethoven's "Midnight Sonata." Chris Sabjan skillfully executed his own guitar arrangement for "In My Life" by the Beatles, incorporating the famous vocal melody into the chord progression.

Percussionist Alonso Figueroa varied things up by playing various etudes by Los Angeles Philharmonic's Mitchell Peters on the snare drum, as well as a couple sonatinas by Georg Philipp Telemann on the marimba. Alonso's drumming was the sonic climax of the afternoon, jolting students out of their daze caused by the quieter, entrancing solo guitar performances.

Atticus McKittrick closed the performance workshop with his guitar skills, interpreting the eccentric "Etude No. 7" by Heitor Villa-Lobos and the subtler "India" by Roland Dyens. McKittrick seemed the most proficient on his instrument as his fingers flawlessly and swiftly produced classical tones with a less tamed rock 'n' roll quality. The skill demonstrated by each guitarist during the workshop was enough to make any attending student -music major or not- want to take guitar lessons.

The music department's student performance workshop was the last free concert of the fall semester. To close out the year, the music department will present the LAVC Holiday Concert featuring the Valley Symphony Orchestra, the LAVC College Choir, the LAVC Philharmonic Choir, and the LAVC Vocal Jazz Ensemble. The performance will be Saturday, Dec. 11 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 12 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the LAVC Mainstage Theatre. Tickets online have sold out but some may still be available at the door.



SAMSON UBA | VALLEY STAR
STRINGING ALONG - Atticus McKittrick shows off his aptitude on a nylon-string guitar in the performance workshop.

VALLEY GETS SCROOGED

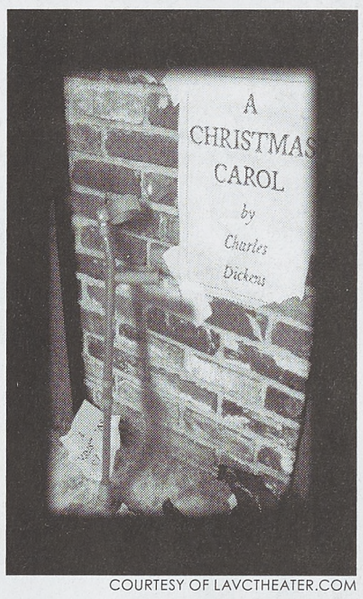
Valley College Theatre Arts Department presented an adaptation of "A Christmas Carol" over the weekend.

JOSHUA LAWRENCE
STAFF WRITER

The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future haunted Valley College's Horseshoe Theater this weekend, as the theater department performed their musical version of "A Christmas Carol."

The keenly-cast group of 25 actors flowed together skillfully in this interesting adaptation of the play by Pete Parkin. The play is based on the story by Charles Dickens as it portrays Ebenezer Scrooge (William F. Burton) as a holiday curmudgeon. He is then visited by three ghosts throughout the night that show him what he has missed out on in life and what his life will be like if he does not change his selfish unkind ways. Director Marjorie Vander Hoff sets the story in a foster home as a Narrator (Nina Donato) reads the story to the children listening and watching as the story takes place right in front of them. This idea really brings the audience into the room with the children, using the classic "fly on the wall" perspective.

Many of the cast members were on the Valley main stage for the very first time. Karis M. Rossi, John Delbarian, Roxie Beck, and Erik Long were among those members and each individual performed well. Delbarian (Marley's Ghost) had a flawless performance as he scared the audience numerous times with his many angry screeches. Long (Fezziwig; Mr. Bell) had two roles and kept his composure during both. Rossi and Beck had smaller roles but both had strong performances. Rossi even got to skate around as the Ghost of Christmas Future.



COURTESY OF LAVCTHEATER.COM

This musical version even contained a dance number to "A Bad Romance" by Lady Gaga, which seemingly kept the crowd very entertained as the audience started moving to the beat.

Perhaps the only problem in the performance was the phony British accent the entire cast was attempting to imitate. The play would have sounded just as good without a fake accent being attempted by each actor. It was slightly distracting, however, it was the only fault in the play. Everything else during the two hour play, including the singing, acting, and dancing went very smoothly and seemed to appeal to the audience.

The play opened Dec.2, and ran through the weekend.It showed again this past weekend, Dec. 9-11. Early arrivals also got to hear many entertaining parodies of Christmas music sung by actors in the play.

TWO CENTS FROM SPENCE

GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER

Recent TV dramas shine a dark light into the American psyche.

J.P. SPENCE

Season five of the Showtime drama "Dexter" wrapped up on Sunday to the highest ratings ever for the show and for the network itself. This column isn't necessarily about how great the show is and how everyone needs to watch it, which they do. Instead, during the finale in the middle of the high-stakes drama that is "Dexter," I was once again reminded that at the heart of the issue I was rooting for the serial killer to get away with murder.

This sheds a light on two issues. One, as politically correct as America tries to be, there is a dark undercurrent of the public perception permeating the airwaves, and two, there is just some really good television out right now.

With the Golden Globes nominations released yesterday, contenders for the coveted TV Drama category are filled with wonderful and flawed characters. "Dexter" aside, there is "Boardwalk Empire," a retelling of Atlantic City criminal kingpin Nucky Johnson. "The Good Wife" follows a litigator who has to rebuild a life for herself and her two children after the fallout of her state senator husband getting caught in a massive sex and corruption scandal. "The Walking Dead" albeit adapted from a graphic novel is a grim and yet altruistic look at human morality in a post-apocalyptic world. The three-time winner "Mad Men," is not so much a drama as a brutally accurate satire depicting the politically correct, yet debauchery-filled era of the 1960s.

While not nominated for best drama, honorable mention needs to be given to Bryan Cranston for his role as a terminally ill high school teacher who turns to a life of crime in order to provide for his family in "Breaking Bad."

What we are witnessing is a watershed moment in television. The reason for this is, with television, not only should programs entertain the audience, but they should also be a reflection of the society we live in at large. If you follow all the truly great shows, there is a connection between that show and the decade it coincided with, be it the depiction of the nuclear family in "Leave It To Beaver" of the '50s, feminism in the '70s with "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," '80s consumerism and affluence with "The Cosby Show," or the slackerdom of "Seinfeld" in the '90s.

This isn't to say that society today is all serial killers, double talking ad salesman (well maybe), and high school teachers that moonlight as drug lords. It's not the characters themselves but what that character portrays. Strip away the veneer and all the characters carry attributes of desperation, impulsiveness, rebuilding, being moralistic yet apathetic. Its these qualities that have come to the American social experience in the first decade of the new millennium.

Televison has become the great mirror, mirror on the wall for audiences. If it's corny sitcoms, reality television, satirical late night or full tilt drama, television has become great as of late because there is a reflection of self (serial killer or whatnot) that identifies with the viewer on a level that they may or may not admit to. Once any media hits that threshold it becomes more than entertainment. It becomes art.

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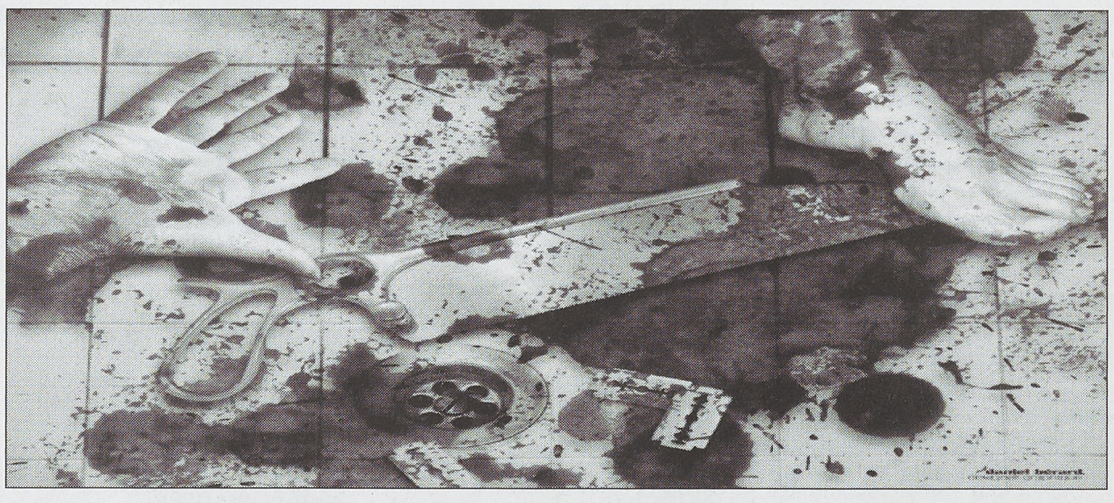

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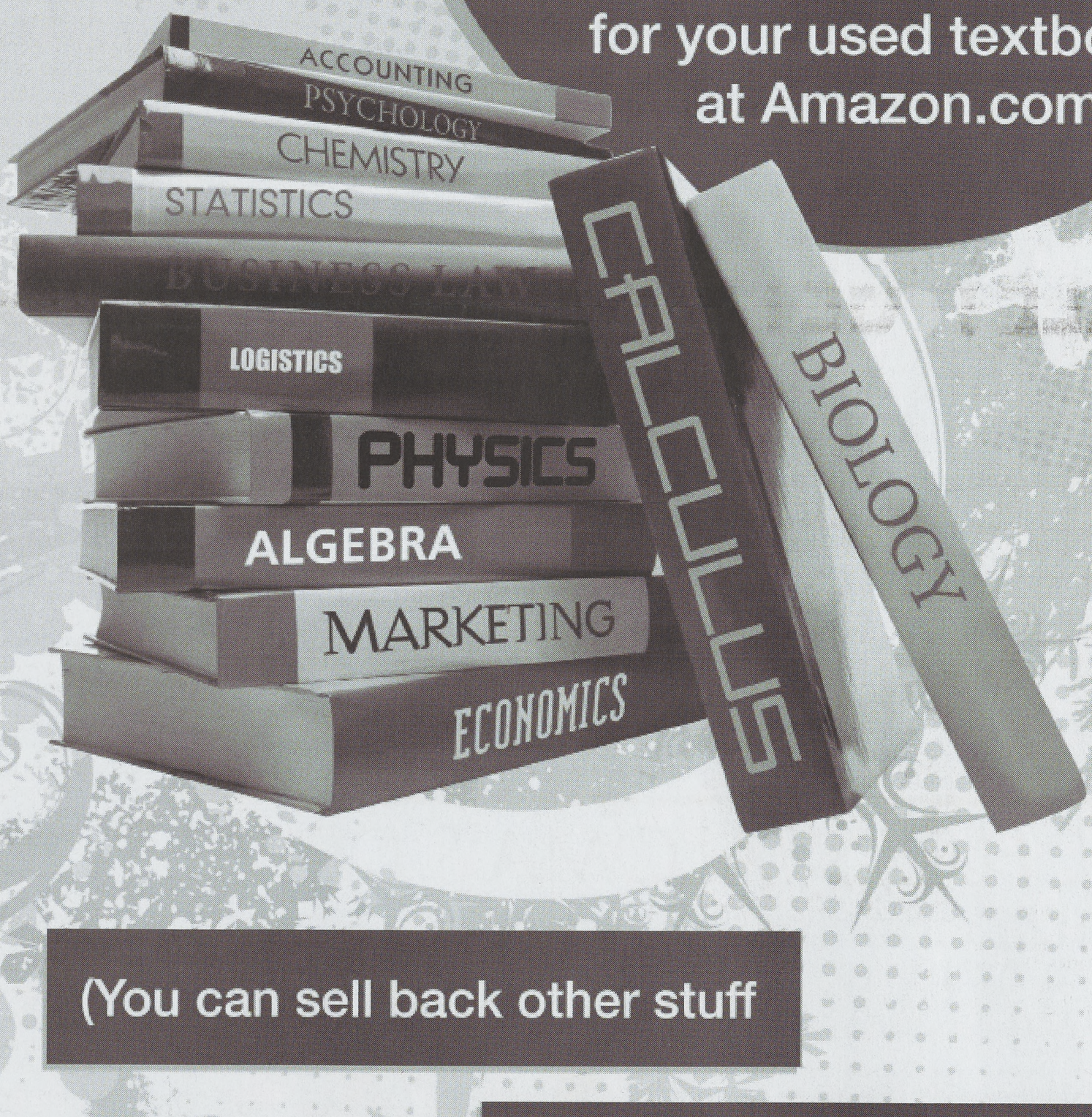


(You can sell back other stuff

like video games and DVDs too.)

amazon.com/buyback

BOUNCING INTO A NEW SEASON

The Lady Monarchs are looking forward to a great season.

CRISTINA SERRATO
STAFF WRITER

The Lady Monarchs have bounced their way into a new season with a new leader and a fresh roster; now they are looking forward to winning under the "Reign of Hang."

"I'm enthusiastic to have Coach Hang as our new coach. She has brought so much to the L.A. Valley basketball program [and] she has taught us how to become more disciplined not just in basketball, but also as an individual," said Monarch guard Alejandra Gallardo. "I feel like that she makes the game more understandable because she has been in our position in the past."

In their final season under former Head Coach Jay Werner the Lady Monarchs failed to find their rhythm. A first game loss to Pasadena City College proved to be a bad omen for Valley, which ended its last season 9-16, with a 6-6 in conference, after a final loss to Santa Monica City College.

"This year is a lot different than last year, especially with a new and better coach. We are actually starting off with wins this season and growing more and more as the potential team we should be," said Monarch guard Chrystal "Chip" Taloma. "Coach Hang is constantly pushing us to be the best and we learn something new everyday whether it's on or off the court."

The Lady Monarchs have been working hard not to repeat last season's bleak outcome and under newly appointed Head Coach Hang they may have started out in the right direction. Beginning the season with back-to-back wins against Napa Valley and Grossmont College the Monarchs looked forward to a stellar season. However, after the first 11 games the Monarchs are currently 6-5, but remain hopeful that the team will regain their footing for a slam-dunk season.

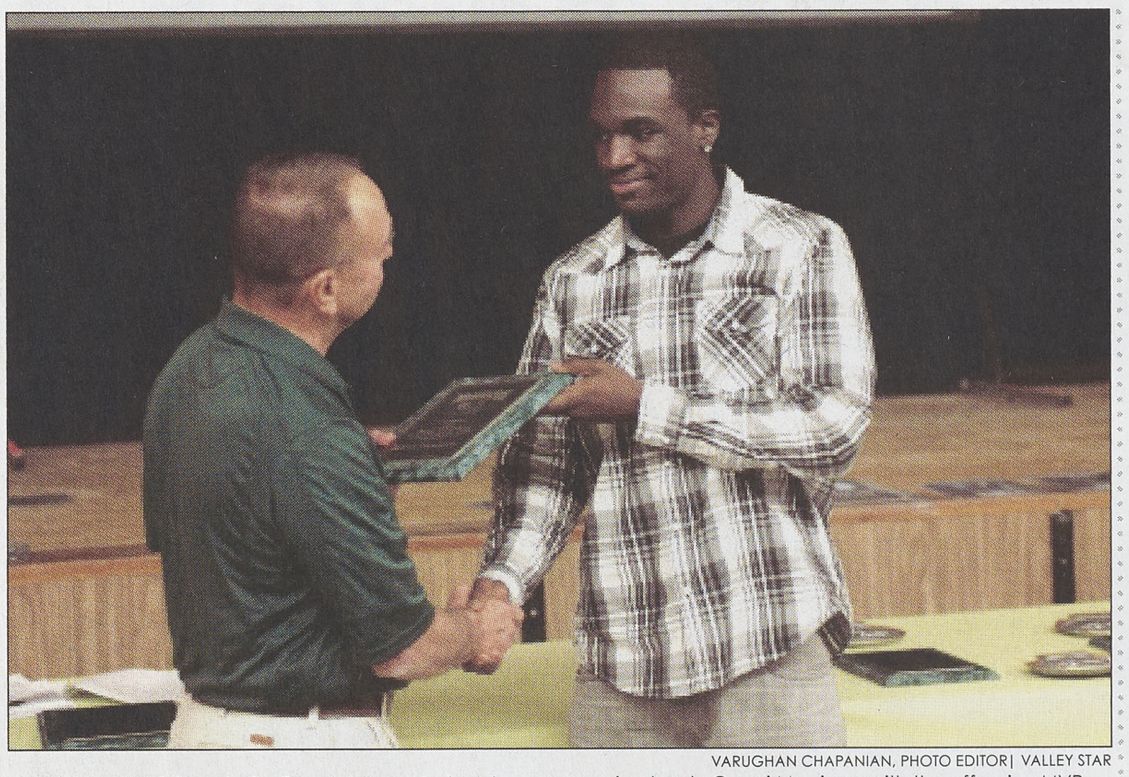
"We are currently working on binding the little gaps and focusing on the little details to make us successful," said Hang. "We definitely can compete against any team in the state and we are currently ranked 14 in the State of California."

The Lady Monarchs are not just focused on winning, they also strive to become a better team and better student-athletes. With a full college schedule, practice and games, acting like a model citizen may be hard for some, but the Lady Monarchs make it look like a piece of cake.

"We have a bunch of ladies who have class, who are respectful, and who are very disciplined," said Hang. "We have been getting many compliments about their behavior on and off the court and I think that speaks highly of the team."

Valley plays San Francisco City College this weekend in San Francisco.

VARUGHAN CHAPANIAN, PHOTO EDITOR | VALLEY STAR
PRACTICE - The Monarchs practiced Monday to prepare for upcoming games.



VARUGHAN CHAPANIAN, PHOTO EDITOR| VALLEY STAR
SUCCESS - Head Coach Jim Fenwick awarded sophomore running back, Germi Morrison, with the offensive MVP.

MONARCHS AWARD SUCCESS

The football team met for the last time this season for their awards dinner honoring the players, coaches and staff.

COURTNEY BASSLER
STAFF WRITER

Coming off of a bittersweet season, the Valley College football team gathered in Monarch Hall Monday to celebrate the team's season with the annual awards banquet dinner.

Head Coach Jim Fenwick began the evening with a brief message of thanks to the players, coaches and staff. The event continued with one of the two slideshows before the dinner from photographer Neil G. Phillips. The photographs were a testament to the team's season and allowed the players and staff to recollect the battles, success and adversity they endured.

"This night is an opportunity to say thanks to the people who make (Valley Football) happen," said Fenwick.

The evening continued with Linebacker Coach Jimmy Simms leading the team in prayer before the dinner was served. The second slideshow, put together by Valley Star contributor Scott Mitchell, was shown during the meal.

"It's a major operation," Fenwick said about the team collectively. "It takes a year long-commitment. I appreciate their help."

After the slideshow and dinner, Fenwick brought all of the sophomores up in order to recognize them and then give out awards voted by the team and determined by the Monarch coaching staff.

Freshman running back Kenny Boggs was awarded Rookie of the Year for offense while freshman linebacker Chukwuma Obiora was awarded Rookie of the Year for defense.

"It feels good," said Boggs. "I'm glad I was recognized by my teammates. There were a lot of challenges for me this year, so it's just good to receive Rookie of the Year."

The Service Exchange for an Accurate Look Player of the Year for offense went to freshman running back Stanley Gonzales and for defense the award was given to freshman defensive back Reggie Luckett.

The Triple "A" award for academics, attitude, and ability was given to quarterback Dan Owen. Not only did Owen receive the Triple "A" award for the night, but he was also awarded with a Captain Award. DiMarco Scarber, Chris Martinez, and Travion Odom also received the Captain awards.

"It's just an honor to play with these guys and everything," said Owen. "To get these awards and be recognized is a cool thing."

The Most Valuable Player awards for offense went to sophomore running back Germi Morrison and sophomore linebacker DiMarco Scarber for defense, and sophomore running back Ewayn Pigford for special teams.

The Big Team-Little Me Award, for putting the team first and being an unselfish player, went to freshman wide receiver Morey Croson. The Iron Man Strength award went to sophomore tight end Marquel Henderson.

One of the final awards of the night was the Jason Leonard award. This award is given to a player who personifies the team through hard work and inspiration, and was awarded to sophomore linebacker Jake Granitz.

"It's a great award and I feel honored," said Granitz. "Last year one of my buddies got it and he's off to college now and I feel like I'm following in his footsteps."

The Monarchs ended their season with an overall record of 6-4. The Monarchs lost to Pierce, 24-23, in the final game of the season. A victory against Pierce would have put the team into the American Championship Bowl. Though the season ended on a sour note for the Monarchs, there is hope in building on the success from this season, especially with Owen returning for his sophomore year.

"It's disappointing the way (this season) turned out at the end," said Owen. "We had a chance to win a championship…we worked hard and I'm proud of these guys. (Next year) we have a great chance to do some great things."

ANALYZE THIS

AMAZING BUT NOT UNSTOPPABLE

Michael Vick, though amazing, is not a Super Bowl quarterback.

LUCAS THOMPSON

When Michael Vick posted 59 points, including 28 in the first quarter, against the Washington Redskins earlier this season, all the bandwagon fans, fantasy league junkies, and dog haters started lobbying for Michael Vick as MVP. Not so fast...

Let's not forget that his Campbell's Chunky Soup counterpart Donovan McNabb couldn't elude the ball boy, threw three interceptions and just looked slow. I suppose he forgot to indulge in his hearty beef noodle soup prior to kickoff… oh wait, I haven't seen one of those commercials in a while.

The fact is your legs go before your arm and McNabb's legs are gone. Look at Brett Favre, that guy has more grey hair than President Obama, pulls out his dentures before bedtime and can still throw strikes with the best of them, all because he relies on his throwing ability.

Telling me your favorite team has a quarterback that can run means absolutely nothing. The NFL has progressively become a more quarterback-oriented league. The rules on protecting the quarterback and receivers are tightening up each and every season and they are not going anywhere anytime soon.

If running the ball at the first sign of pressure is on your agenda or you break out of the pocket before checking down to your running back, then you will not be a Super-Bowl-winning quarterback in the NFL. Michael Vick, though much improved in his decision making, still wants to run. He still wants to gain rushing yards and he still wants to do it by himself. Come playoff time, if Vick continues to go for the big runs and exciting plays, defenses will expose him.

Though Vick is playing well, he is not the MVP. Have you seen Tom Brady play lately? Brady has thrown for 3,398 yards and 29 touchdowns. This is 12 touchdowns and nearly 1,000 yards more than Vick. Granted, Vick missed a few games, but come on; Bengals quarterback Carson Palmer has a higher passer rating than Vick and he has thrown 18 interceptions this season.

It all comes down to adjusting to the game and not assuming the game will adjust to you.

Two of the most elite quarterbacks of the decade, Tom Brady and Peyton Manning, raced a few weeks ago, and you know who won? Bill Belichick (laugh).

Moving up in the pocket, adjusting to pressure and being patient is what defines a great quarterback. Go take a look at a few of the quarterbacks who have made it to the Super Bowl over the last decade: Ben Roethlisberger, Eli Manning, Peyton Manning, Drew Brees, and Tom Brady – all quarterbacks who are patient in the pocket, shed guys off and look downfield for the open man.

I personally love watching Michael Vick play, I love picking him in Madden and enjoy watching his fantasy league numbers go through the roof. If "fun to watch" is what you look for in an NFL quarter back then rest assured Vick is your guy. But if you're looking for long -term success and Lombardi trophies, I suggest you look a little further.

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BASKETBALL FUELS TALOMA'S DRIVE

Teammates deem "Kookie" Taloma the Energizer Bunny, the point guard who has a huge love of the game, and a good leader.

CRISTINA SERRATO
STAFF WRITER

Chriselle Taloma's stature is not a common one for a basketball player. But when you see Taloma on the court, her leadership skills and love for basketball show clearly.

Playing basketball is part of her family, and Taloma's passion for basketball started when she was at age 12.

"My (siblings) and I are very athletic children," said Taloma. "One time we were messing around and throwing ketchup packets in the trash can, and that's when my uncle told me that I should play basketball, and I was like, 'okay, give me a ball' and that's when I started messing around the basketball."

Taloma, figured out that it was something she wanted to pursue after she left Holmes Middle School where she played.

"I didn't really play serious basketball until after middle school," explained Taloma. "The summer from middle school to high school was when I started training and playing organized basketball."

Taloma also accredits her love for the game to her long-time teammate and friend, guard Porcha Davis.

"We played everywhere together," said Taloma. "Playing with her is so easy because we know each other, and now our chemistry is way better than anybody's, even my sister's."

While having a great bond with a fellow teammate is also important, having a sister who plays the sport makes the game special to Kookie.

"I like playing with my sister," Kookie Taloma said. "We do have chemistry playing basketball together."

Prior to playing at Valley, Taloma started on the Monroe High School varsity squad all four years, while managing to play on two travel teams. This dedication and love for basketball has been clearly carried over to her time with the Monarchs while making her one of Head Coach Monica Hang's go-to leaders.

"Kookie is one of our leaders because she leads by example," said Hang. "She understands that hard work must be exerted to become successful. Since I've met her, she has grown tremendously as a player and individual. She is a pleasure to have on our Valley team and I can't wait until the end of season to see the person and player she will become."

Guard Porcha Davis and forward Richelle Najera agree that Taloma brings good energy when it comes to basketball.

"She's really a good leader and that's what makes her a stand-out player," said Najera. "She has a love for the sport; you can tell when she's playing … she always has a smile on."

VARUGHAN CHAPANIAN, PHOTO EDITOR| VALLEY STAR
STRETCH - Chriselle Taloma stretched before Tuesday's practice.